

[23 March, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

1999-2000	Koppal	1.18 lakh
	Ballary	2.01 lakh
2000-2001	Koppal	2.90 lakh
	Ballary	1.90 lakh

Effects of Budget on Gauge Conversion Programmes

3145. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railway budget does not attempt to mobilise funds through revision of passenger fares, commercialisation of surplus land and privatisation of selected services;

(b) if so, whether this would adversely affect the on-going gauge conversion programmes;

(c) whether it is a fact that because of on-going gauge conversion works in many sectors, disrupting passenger/freight traffic, the revenue would be less to the extent of services discontinued; and

(d) whether the delay in implementing/completing the gauge conversion works on schedule would result in cost over-runs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Railways, in the Budget Estimates for 2001-02, have proposed to increase the earnings from traditional sources by promoting higher growth in Passenger and Freight traffic. Other Coaching and Sundry earnings. Freight rates have also been proposed to be marginally increased. To augment Railways' earnings, revenue generation from non-traditional sources viz. leasing of 'right of way' for laying Optic Fibre Cables, commercial utilisation of railway land and air space and commercial publicity on rolling stock etc. has also been budgeted for.

(b) Gauge Conversion projects are now being funded mainly through Capital from General Exchequer. Adequate funds have been provided in keeping with the requirement based on progress of projects and their relative priority.

(c) Temporary disruption of passenger/freight traffic does occur during the mega block of 2-3 months while executing gauge

conversion work. However, after conversion of the route, capacity is augmented and consequently earnings are expected to increase.

(d) Yes, Sir. However, delays may occur due to several reasons, many of which may be beyond the Railways' control.

Rail Tariff Regulatory Authority

3146. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Rail Tariff Regulatory Authority is proposed to be set up for following correct skewed pricing policy and adopt organisational changes for streamlining the passenger and cargo services;

(b) if so, by when the above proposal is likely to be implemented; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No, Sir. There is no proposal to set up a Rail Tariff Regulatory Authority at present.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Indigenous device to detect track fractures

3147. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item appearing in the Indian Express dated the 23rd February, 2001 to the effect that five engineers have successfully developed an indigenous device to help Railways to detect fractures in tracks, if so, Government's information in the matter;

(b) what is Government's reaction in the matter;

(c) what are the main features of the said development;

(d) whether the Railways would adopt this indigenous device;

(e) if so, when and how Government would adopt the same; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?